

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 7254

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PGOV, IS, EG, JO
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION ON PEACE PROCESS WITH DEPUTY MINISTER
IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

1. WE HAD LENGTHY CONVERSATION ON PEACE PROCESS JUNE 6
WITH MK YORAM ARIDOR (HERUT) WHO IS DEPUTY MINISTER IN
THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER. DURING TALK WE WERE
PERHAPS PROVIDED ANOTHER DISTRESSING STRAW IN THE WIND
REGARDING CABINET DECISION, PROBABLY A WEEK AWAY, ON TWO
U.S. QUESTIONS.

2. ARIDOR SAID THERE WERE FOUR THEORECTICAL POSSIBILITIES
CONCERNING FUTURE OF WEST BANK AFTER FIVE-YEAR TRANSITION
PERIOD: (1) INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE -- NEARLY EVERY-
BODY, INCLUDING GOI AND U.S. OPPOSES; (2) FORMAL LINK
WITH JORDAN -- THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL BECAUSE OF
PROBABLE EVOLUTION OF WEST BANK INTO HOSTILE INDEPENDENT
STATE, OR EVEN WORSE, OF PALESTINIAN REGIME IN AMMAN
GOVERNING FROM QALQILYA TO IRAQ; (3) FORMAL LINK WITH
ISRAEL -- NOT ACCEPTABLE TO U.S. OR ARABS; AND (4) THE
BEGIN AUTONOMY PLAN.

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3. ACCORDING TO ARIDOR, ONLY THE FOURTH POSSIBILITY WAS
A REALISTIC CHOICE AT THE PRESENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
ISRAEL. BEGIN'S AUTONOMY SCHEME HAS ADVANTAGE OF AFFORDING
ISRAEL THE NECESSARY SECURITY WHILE PROVIDING ARABS
ON THE WEST BANK WITH MEANS OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION.
ARIDOR SAID THAT OF COURSE DETAILS OF BEGIN'S PLAN WERE
SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

WITH JORDAN NOT ALREADY EXPLICITLY IN THE PLAN, BUT THAT IN NO EVENT COULD AMMAN ASSUME SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WEST BANK AFTER FIVE-YEAR INTERIM PERIOD. THAT, HE ARGUED, WOULD SIMPLY BE TOO DANGEROUS FOR ISRAEL TO ALLOW.

4. COMMENT: ARIDOR, A TRUSTED BEGIN LIEUTENANT, PROFESSED TO BE SPEAKING PERSONALLY RATHER THAN ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT. INDEED, HIS REMARKS DO NOT REFLECT POSITIONS OF HERUT'S MORE FLEXIBLE COALITION PARTNERS NOR GOI DESIRE TO AVOID STARK CONFRONTATION WITH WASHINGTON. BOTH THOSE FACTORS WILL NO DOUBT INJECT MORE SUBTLETY INTO ISRAEL'S RESPONSE TO WASHINGTON. NONETHELESS, WE HAD THE DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT ARIDOR WAS EXPRESSING SOMETHING NEAR THE UNVARNISHED ATTITUDE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AS HE APPROACHES THE NEXT CABINET DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT. AND ALL THIS TALK OF SECURITY IS OF COURSE ADDITIONAL TO BEGIN'S EQUALLY IMPORTANT CONVICTION THAT ISRAEL HAS A COMPELLING RELIGIO-HISTORICAL CLAIM TO WEST BANK.
LEWIS

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